

Supplemental Response
Serial No. 09/917,224
Page 2 of 4

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

Patent No. 6,217,272 has limited disclosure regarding a pallet (15). The Examiners requested additional time to further review the prior art.

Applicants also acknowledge the telephone call from Examiner Nguyen on May 13, 2003, during which Examiner Nguyen suggested that Applicants file a supplemental Response including a request for withdrawal of the finality of the Office action mailed March 7, 2003 and a request for reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-9. Accordingly, Applicants submit this Response After Final.

Priority Under 35 U.S.C. § 119

Applicants request that the Examiner acknowledge the claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) to provisional application Serial No. 60/221,030, filed July 27, 2000 by appropriate indication on an Office Action Summary Form PTO-326.

Rejection of Claims 1-9 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,217,272 to Felsenthal ("Felsenthal"). Applicants respectfully submit, however, that Felsenthal does not anticipate claim 1 because Felsenthal does not teach all of the limitations recited by claim 1. As similarly described in the Response filed on December 11, 2002, this conclusion is supported by the following reasons.

Felsenthal does not teach a transport positioning feature nor a processes alignment feature of a pallet, as recited by claim 1, because Felsenthal is not directed to features that particularly position a pallet with respect to a transport mechanism and with respect to a process chamber. Felsenthal discloses only one example of a pallet (15), and teaches that " substrates (14) may be supported by a pallet (15) or any type of substrate carrier known in the art." See Felsenthal, column 4, lines 50-51 and 55-56. Felsenthal, however, is silent regarding pallet alignment features, as recited by claim 1.

The Specification of Felsenthal includes only two additional comments regarding pallets:

Batch processing systems process an entire batch of substrate [sic] simultaneously.
Substrates are either loaded in the process chamber one-by-one or they are loaded onto a

Supplemental Response
Serial No. 09/917,224
Page 3 of 4

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

pallet, which is then loaded into the process chamber. See Felsenthal, column 1, lines 63-66.

"[T]he present invention features an apparatus for simultaneously transporting and processing substrates.... The substrates may be positioned on a pallet or free standing. See Felsenthal, column 2, lines 48-51.

Thus, Felsenthal teaches that substrates can be loaded into an in-line process system with or without use of a pallet (15), but the Specification of Felsenthal does not describe pallet alignment features, as recited by claim 1.

Moreover, no figure in Felsenthal illustrates alignment features, as recited by claim 1. Felsenthal shows the pallet (15) in only one Figure, which does not teach the alignment features recited by claim 1. See Felsenthal, FIG. 2.

For the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Felsenthal does not teach engaging a transport positioning feature of a substrate pallet with a transport alignment feature of a transport mechanism, and engaging a processes alignment feature of the substrate pallet with a process chamber alignment feature located within the process chamber, as recited by claim 1. Therefore, independent claim 1 is patentable over Felsenthal. Because claim 1 is patentable over Felsenthal, Applicants submit that claims 2-9, which depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, are patentable over Felsenthal as well.

Objection to Claims 10-17

The Office action objected to claims 10-17 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. In view of the above comments regarding claim 1, from which claims 10-17 depend, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to claims 10-17 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the finality of the Office action mailed on March 7, 2003. Applicants further request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-9, with claims 1-17 proceeding to issue. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned, if the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation could be helpful in expediting prosecution of the instant application.

Supplemental Response
Serial No. 09/917,224
Page 4 of 4

Date: May 15, 2003
Reg. No. 45,054

Tel. No.: (617) 248-7376
Fax No.: (617) 248-7100

2625355

Respectfully submitted,



Jamie H. Rose
Attorney for Applicants
Testa, Hurwitz, & Thibault, LLP
125 High Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

BEST AVAILABLE COPY